

THE PROFESSIONAL APPROACH

As a professional you must make your career decisions objectively, free of the emotional pressures you are likely to feel later when asked to reconsider. While well meaning friends, relatives and business associates will offer advice; you must depend primarily on your own judgment. After all, you are the only one who is in the position to understand all of the implications of a counter offer. Expect your company to be sorry to see you leave and to make some attempt to keep you. At best, their response should be considered flattering, but beset with numerous pitfalls that you should not risk.

End your relationship with your employer as professionally as you began it. Your new company will be anxious to have you start, so you should do so as soon as possible. One week's notice is often adequate; a maximum of two weeks is always sufficient.

A counter offer is really a belated affirmation of the contributions you have made to your old company. Move ahead to your new job with the goal of making yourself as valuable to your new employer as you were to the old.

TIME TO RESIGN

Most top executives agree that the days of the "gold watch for 30 years of faithful service" are gone. In fact, experience at several companies over a long period of time is considered an asset that brings a variety of experiences and perspectives to a new job. Today, changing jobs is a routine part of every growing professional's career.

You are probably considering a change because your present position doesn't offer the growth environment you need. Nevertheless, your company has helped you progress professionally, and as a result, you may feel a little uncomfortable resigning. After all, leaving a job means leaving managers and co-workers whom you see socially, and who have been instrumental in advancing your career.

What then should you expect when you tender your resignation? Undoubtedly, your company will be sorry to lose you. After all, you have contributed to their sales and profits, and are probably involved in several projects drawing on your unique talents. If you were in your boss's position what would *you* be inclined to do when a valuable employee resigned?

THE COUNTER OFFER

It is natural instinct to resist change and avoid disruption, and your present employer will be no exception. If you are doing a good job, he will want to keep you and will attempt with a counter offer. Even though you have accepted a new job elsewhere, he will try to convince you that you have made a mistake.

COUNTER OFFERS ARE MADE IN MANY WAYS:

- 1.) "We have plans for you that have been scheduled for implementation the first of next month. I guess it's my fault for not telling you."
- 2.) "I want to let you in on some confidential information. There is a significant reorganization developing that will mean a significant promotion for you within 6 months."
- 3.) "We'll match your new offer. This raise was supposed to go into effect the first of next quarter anyway, but because of your fine record, we'll start it on the first of next month."
- 4.) "The president and vice president want to have dinner with you tonight before you make your final decision."

IMPLICATIONS OF A COUNTER OFFER

A counter offer can be very flattering, sometimes causing you emotions to obscure your objective decision to leave your present employer. There is also the natural feeling of "buyer's remorse"—the vague apprehension of change that subtly urges you to consider your decision. When confronted with a counter offer, ask yourself these questions:

- 1.) I made a decision to leave because I felt another environment would better fill my career ends. If I stay, will the situation at my company *really* improve just because I said I was quitting?
- 2.) If I decide to stay, will my loyalty be suspect and affect my chance for advancement in the future?
- 3.) If my loyalty is in question, will I be an early layoff when business slows down?
- 4.) They are offering me a pay raise to stay. Is it just my annual review coming early?
- 5.) The raise they offered to keep me is above their guidelines for my job. Does that mean they are "buying time" until they can find my replacement within their regular salary bracket?
- 6.) In the final analysis, I got this counter offer because I resigned. Will I have to threaten to quit every time I want to advance with my company in the future?

In summary, it is important that you keep things in true perspective. No one but you can understand all the factors that led you to this point in your career.

Sincerely, *Jeff Wolfe*,
President, *Quality Search*

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